

**Statement of Casey Jarman, Board Member, Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park,
Before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources of the
House Government Reform Committee, at an Oversight Hearing on National Parks of
Hawai'i on December 1, 2005, in Honolulu, Hawai'i**

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and other members of the Subcommittee. My name is Casey Jarman. I am here today representing the Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on key issues facing the National Park Service in Hawai'i, in particular Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Within the approximately 333,000 acres of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, visitors have the opportunity to experience a spectacular array of environments that range from sea level to over 13,000 feet above sea level at the summit of the Mauna Loa Volcano, and including its most famous feature -- Kilauea, the world's most active volcano. With over half of the Park designated as wilderness, the Park is a showcase for Hawai'i's unique natural, archaeological and cultural landscapes.

As federal Park budgets have grown tighter, partnerships with 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organizations, such as the Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park (hereinafter "Friends"), have become a way for parks to do more with less. Originally incorporated in 1997 as The Friends of 'Ainahou, (a ranch within the Park), the Friends' expanded role in supporting activities and projects throughout the Park is reflected in their re-designation as the Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.

Currently, the Friends is a community-based, volunteer organization working as a partner with the Park under a cooperative agreement to augment Park resources by offering educational programs, administering grants, raising funds for agreed-upon Park projects, and providing a volunteer workforce for specific Park projects. Specifically, the Friends' organization offers an annual series of small, high-quality, educational seminars that expand the Park's educational capacity. Among the grant projects it has administered are the National Park Service's *Parks as Classrooms* program; Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) grants for annual Cultural Festivals; and Hawai'i Council for the Humanities funds for the publication of *Oral Histories of 'Ainahou Ranch*. In 2005, the Friends raised the requisite matching funds to obtain a \$15,000 grant from the National Park Foundation to produce educational materials for the Park's Junior Rangers' Program and another \$3,000 to purchase tents for public events at Kahuku. The Junior Rangers' Program is fully funded by non-federal monies raised by the Friends. In addition, volunteers regularly assist in maintaining the 'Ainahou ranch house and grounds, as well as in removing invasive species in critically endangered areas of the Park. In these ways, the Friends consistently support their mission: ***To support and promote restoration, protection, understanding and appreciation of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park.***

The Friends' organization, with the active support and involvement of the Park, is rapidly growing in membership, scope and capacity. What started as a small group of volunteers who set out to save a treasured historic ranch within the Park, has evolved into an organization with a vision matching the potential of this International Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage site. In just three years, the membership has grown exponentially from 40 to more than 160 members.

The Board too has expanded both in number and in the range of talents and interests brought to bear upon our mission.

One section of the Park in which the Friends anticipate a growing collaboration is the 116,000-acre Kahuku District. Congress wisely spent \$22 million to acquire this property; however, because Congress failed to provide operating funds for Kahuku, the public has extremely limited access. While it is the Friends' intention to engage in fund-raising for Park projects in the Kahuku District, it is imperative that Congress provide sufficient funds to allow the Park to effectively manage and provide meaningful public access to this unique natural, cultural, and historical area acquired by the public's tax dollars.

As noted earlier in my testimony, the Friends' group works in partnership with the Park to support its mission. The Board has recently expanded its role to include a significant philanthropic component. As the Friends' Board approaches potential major donors, it is important that we be able to demonstrate that their money will be wisely spent. To that end, we believe that Congress needs to provide the Park with sufficient funding to replace their 30-year old Master Plan. With a new General Management Plan, we would be able to share with potential donors the Park's vision for the 21st Century and suggest ways in which they can be part of this exciting and important enterprise.

The Friends anticipates a growing collaboration with the Park in the development of the Kahuku District, in providing increased educational opportunities, in fostering local and global stewardship of the Park, in seeking and administering grant funds, and in direct fund-raising to enhance and support the efforts of Park administration and staff. We encourage Congress to ensure that the Park receives sufficient funding to operate the Park as one of our nation's crown jewels. In turn, the Friends' group is prepared to continue to be a vital part of the future of the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate being invited to give testimony at this important hearing and thank you for your interest and that of this subcommittee in supporting Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. I will be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Casey Jarman on Behalf of the
Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park